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UMM is awarded Department of Justice grant

Summary:

(January 13, 2004)-The U.S. Department of Justice has awarded \$176,009 to the University of Minnesota, Morris under the Grants To Combat Violent Crimes Against Women on Campuses Program. UMM was one of only 10 new programs funded this year.

The program provides a unique opportunity for higher education institutions to partner with police, prosecutors, members of the judiciary, victim advocates, health care providers and other related groups in order to reduce violent crimes against women on campus. These comprehensive efforts are designed to enhance victim services, implement prevention and education programs, and develop and strengthen security and investigation strategies in order to prevent and respond to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking crimes on campuses.

"We know from U.S. Department of Justice statistics that women on college campuses are at greater risk for sexual assault than women in the general population or in a comparable age group," said Sandy Olson-Loy, UMM vice chancellor for student affairs. "This grant will support our efforts to foster a respectful, healthy campus community at UMM."

Over the next two years, UMM will create a program that strengthens victim/survivor advocacy and services, builds a coordinated comprehensive education and prevention effort, and creates a campus culture that addresses the roots of gender and relationship violence while fostering healthy relationships. In addition, the program will seek to:

- * Build a coordinated campus sexual violence and relationship violence education and prevention program, beginning in New Student Orientation and students' first year on campus.
- * Enhance training and support for the UMM and Stevens County community response team.
- * Raise awareness, challenge thinking, and inspire leadership concerning sexual violence and relationship violence reduction and prevention, and the building of healthy relationships.

It is expected that the UMM program will serve as a model for similar smaller educational institutions, particularly those in rural areas.

The grant will complement existing initiatives at UMM and in the community that address sexual assault and relationship violence, victim/survivor advocacy, education and prevention. Among them are the UMM Sexual Assault Prevention Committee in association with the Stevens County Sexual Assault Taskforce and Response Team. Current program strengths include a growing partnership between campus and community response team members.

Who will implement the project?

The capacity to implement this program is found through collaboration. Under the leadership of a program coordinator, the following local and regional organizations will bring critical pieces to the table to form the foundation for a sustainable program:

- * Someplace Safe (formerly Region IV Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Crisis Center) empowers women and their children by providing advocacy for Stevens County and western Minnesota.
- * Stevens Community Medical Center and UMM Health Service provide exams and follow-up care for victims and consult on educational programming and response protocol.
- * Stevens County Attorney's Office prosecutes criminal cases.
- * Campus Police with the City of Morris Police and the Stevens County Sheriff's Department provide coordinated community safety services.

UMM Student Counseling and Student Affairs staff will co-direct the project and provide support for students. In addition, the following UMM offices and programs will play key roles: Office of Residential Life, Student Activities, Minority Student Program, Disability Services, Commission on Women, Women's Studies academic discipline, and the student-led Women's Resource Center.

Henry Fulda, UMM assistant vice chancellor for student life, values this strong partnership and noted, "We look at our efforts in connection with this grant as continued evidence of the campus and community's commitment to meeting UMM student needs."

Under the violence against women grant programs administered by the Department of Justice, the Office has awarded more than \$1 billion in grant funds, making over 1,250 discretionary grants and over 350 STOP (Services, Training, officers, Prosecutors) formula grants to the states and territories.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.